GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1944
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2016
Expansion of Bhuntar Airport
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Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the matter regarding expansion of Bhuntar airport in Himachal Pradesh is pending for years with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large number of domestic and foreign tourists visit Kullu-Manali but these tourists have to face difficulties owing to a single flight from Delhi;

(d) if so, whether the Government is likely to permit at least two flights from Delhi for the convenience of tourists; and

(e) if so, the time by which it is likely to be done and if not, the reasons therefor ?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION
(Dr Mahesh Sharma)

(a) & (b): Kullu (Bhuntar) airport is an operational airport and is suitable for operation of ATR type of aircraft with load restrictions in fair weather conditions. As per the study report submitted by IIT Roorkee, the runway can be extended by 550m subject to diversion of river Beas and acquiring additional 1000m x 200m land in the river bed by the State Government.

(c) & (d) : Flight operations in domestic sector have been deregulated and the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDG) issued by the Government. However, the airline operators provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. The draft National Civil Aviation Policy 2015 envisages implementation of Regional connectivity scheme with affordable fare by way of revival of unused and under-served aerodromes/airstrips and by viability gap funding for airline operators etc. to meet the demands of increasing traffic and to avoid air congestion.

(e) : No definite timeline for expansion of Bhuntar airport can be drawn at this stage as it is for the State Government to demarcate and acquire the land, complete the process of river training / river diversion etc. and to hand over the land to AAI for extension of runway.